

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) voted Thursday for H.R. 2892, the 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, which invests in America's safety by bolstering security infrastructure and personnel at our borders, aviation systems, ports and transit systems and trains first responders and law enforcement personnel.

"A safe and secure America is our first priority," said Congressman Rodriguez. "This bill provides critical resources to do that, while keeping our budget fiscally sound through the elimination of waste and targeting dollars where they are most needed."

As a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Rodriguez plays a lead role in securing funding that will further national security and keep American communities safe. The 23rd Congressional District, one of the largest districts in the country, has 785 rugged miles of border with Mexico and faces significant challenges when it comes to ensuring safety and security.

H.R. 2892, which passed 307 to 114, fully funds 20,163 Border Patrol officers in FY 2010, an increase of 7,814 agents (63 percent) since 2006. Nearly 85 percent of the officers are stationed along the Southwest Border. In FY 2009, the 23rd Congressional District received \$12 million in Operation Stonegarden Grants through Homeland Security Appropriations. The grants pay for additional personnel, overtime, travel and other costs by border law enforcement agencies as they deal with heavier cross-border traffic and increased security risks.

In FY 2009, El Paso County received \$642,844 in Stonegarden funding; Jeff Davis County \$1.4 million; Presidio County \$1.3 million; Brewster County \$1.8 million; Kinney County \$1.9 million; Val Verde County \$1.9 million; Maverick County \$2 million; and the Kickapoo Tribe of Texas \$1.1 million.

More than 84 percent of FY 2009 Stonegarden funding was directed at the Southwest Border, up from 59 percent in FY 2008. In 2007, Rodriguez fought to revive and expand Operation Stonegarden, which began in 2005 to enhance cooperation and coordination between federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement agencies operating along United States borders.

“This increased focus on the Southwest Border is a welcome acknowledgement that we are on the frontlines of the fight to protect our country,” Rodriguez said. “I look forward to bringing more funding and resources to my district so our residents can live in safe and secure communities.”

H.R. 2892 also provides first responders with the equipment and training they need to do their jobs. It includes over \$3 billion in grants for local municipalities to protect critical infrastructure in high-threat areas, help local fire departments and upgrade central command facilities.

The bill improves aviation security by providing \$1 billion for explosive detection systems at airports; provides \$300 million in port security grants; prohibits the release of Guantanamo detainees into the United States and provides \$397 million to combat cyber security threats.

For more information on the bill, visit <http://appropriations.house.gov>

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